

# CLUB MARYLAND News

## State of Maryland Employee Wellness Program

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor  
Michael S. Steele, Lieutenant Governor

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

SUMMER 2003

### GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE

We are fortunate to live in a state where an abundance of public parks, trails, and beaches awaits us. My travels have given me a greater appreciation for Maryland's beauty, even in the rain and snow. I encourage you all to get out there and enjoy yourselves.

What better way to boost our health and well-being than by participating in outdoor activities like walking, running, biking, boating, or swimming?

Another advantage we Marylanders have is the abundance of fresh summer fruits and vegetables and local seafood. Not only do these foods taste great, they give us more energy and help keep us healthy. So visit your local Farmers Markets for fresh produce. Buy Maryland seafood for dinner, or get out the old fishing pole and crab net and catch your own.

Drew, Kendel, and I plan to enjoy all Maryland has to offer this summer. There are some important safety tips to keep in mind. Wear sunscreen, pay attention to water safety rules, and check for ticks. Most importantly as you travel, buckle up and make sure the kids are in an appropriate car safety seat. Kendel is concerned not only with the safety of our son, but all Maryland's children. Please read her summer safety tips on page 3 of this issue.

Explore the outdoors and have a safe and enjoyable summer.

*Sincerely,*

*Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.*



### CLUB MARYLAND News Online

**T**he Fall issue of **CLUB MARYLAND News** will only be available online. This change is part of an effort to save state funds wherever possible. The online version of **CLUB MARYLAND News** has been available since the fall of 2001 at [www.dbm.maryland.gov/clubmd](http://www.dbm.maryland.gov/clubmd). Not only will you find a printable version of **CLUB MARYLAND News** but the interactive site includes: programs and services, a monthly wellness bulletin, health and fitness articles, self-help information, healthy website links, fitness center discounts, and much more.

### WHAT'S INSIDE...

- Self-Care: Preventing heart disease... Avoiding ticks **Page 2**
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WITH THIS HEART-HEALTHY LIFESTYLE...

## Say so long to heart disease

**W**hat could prevent about 75% of all heart attacks in the U.S.?

First and foremost, changing our diets, say Dr. Frank Hu and Dr. Walter Willett, nutrition and epidemiology experts at the Harvard School of Public Health.

They believe we can reach this heart-healthy goal if we:

- **Eat a diet** that's rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts, and heart-healthy fats (e.g., olive and canola oils, fatty fish or fish-oil capsules, walnuts, flaxseed). For protein, we should eat more beans, fatty fish, and lean chicken — and less red meat.
- **Avoid foods** made or cooked with hydrogenated vegetable oils (e.g., many margarines, store-bought

sweets, desserts, and most French fries).

Hydrogenated oils contain trans fatty acids. These fats are hard on the heart and blood vessels — even more so than the saturated fats found in foods like red meat and full-fat dairy.

- **Avoid refined, “white” foods**, such as white bread, cookies, cakes, crackers, and pastries.

These foods are quickly turned to sugar in the body. This boosts insulin production, raises triglycerides (a blood fat), and lowers “good” HDL cholesterol.

**Also important:** a healthy weight, at least 30 minutes of exercise every day, and not smoking.

Source: *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 288, Pg. 2569

INFLAMMATION...

## The hidden heart attack trigger

**Do you have gum disease? Do you smoke? Are you overweight? Are you a chronic couch potato?**

If you answered yes to any one (or more) of these questions, you could be harboring a painless, low-level inflammation in your body, specifically, in your blood vessels.

And inflamed blood vessels can eventually lead to heart and blood vessel disease — and heart attack and stroke.

Scientists are now learning that chronic, low-level inflammation may account for more heart attacks than high cholesterol.



**How do you reduce this inflammation? Take care of your teeth and gums, eat a healthy diet, exercise, lose weight, and don't smoke.** And if those aren't successful, talk to your doctor about taking aspirin or statin drugs.

Testing for C-reactive protein (CRP) — a marker for inflammation — can tell you and your doctor whether you have inflammation simmering in your body. This is a relatively inexpensive test, but still isn't routinely ordered.

Source: *New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 347, Pg. 1557

LYME DISEASE...

### AVOIDING TICKS

- ✓ **Wear light-colored clothing** to make ticks easier to see.
- ✓ **Wear long-sleeved shirts** and long pants and tuck them into your socks so ticks won't have an attachment site.
- ✓ **Wear closed-toe shoes.**
- ✓ **Stay to the center of trails** to avoid grass and brush.
- ✓ **Check for ticks** at least once a day, and again at the end of the day.
- ✓ **Use a tick repellent** with DEET on skin and clothing.
- ✓ **Avoid sitting** directly on the ground or on stone walls (havens for ticks).

### REMOVING TICKS

- **Don't panic.** Not all ticks carry disease, and even if they do, it takes about 36 to 48 hours before they can transmit Lyme disease.
- **Use a pair** of pointed precision tweezers or your fingers wrapped in tissue. Grasp the tick right where it enters the skin. Don't squeeze the body (this could release disease-causing organisms into the bite wound).
- **Pull firmly** and steadily outward. Don't twist the tick out or apply irritants (e.g., hot match, gas). These methods can backfire or even increase the chances of the tick transmitting disease.
- **Place the tick** in a vial or jar of alcohol to kill it.
- **Clean** the bite wound with disinfectant and watch for symptoms beginning 3 to 30 days after the bite (e.g., rash, flu-like symptoms).

Source: *American Lyme Disease Foundation*

WHEN YOUR GRANDCHILDREN VISIT...

## Tips to prevent poisoning

**C**hildren are curious and they move fast — which is why parents and grandparents need to keep all potentially hazardous substances locked up and out of reach.

### POISON PREVENTION TIPS

- **Use child-resistant packaging** properly by closing the container securely after you use it. (And remember, it is only child-resistant, not child-proof.)
- **Keep all chemicals**, medicines, and supplements locked up and out of sight.
- **Call the poison center** immediately in case of poisoning. Keep activated charcoal

tablets on hand (but use them only if the poison center tells you to).

Keep this number by your phone: 1-800-222-1222. It will connect you to the nearest poison control center.

- **When using a product**, don't let your grandchild out of sight — even if you must take the child with you to answer the phone or doorbell.
- **Keep all products** in their original containers. Leave their original labels on (and read label warnings).
- **Don't put decorative lamps** and candles that contain lamp oil where children can reach them.
- **Always have the light on** when giving or taking medicine. Check the dosage every time.
- **Avoid taking medicine** in front of children. Don't refer to medicine as "candy."
- **Clean out your medicine cabinet** at least once a year and safely dispose of unneeded and outdated medicines.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission



### A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRST LADY

**I**t's that time of year again for backyard barbecues, trips to the beach, bleacher seats at baseball games, and catching lightning bugs after dark. But for parents, the not-so-lazy days of summer should also signal a heightened awareness for child safety. Following are a few summertime rules every household should try to follow:

- **Never leave children alone** in or near water.
- **Apply sunscreen with SPF 15 or greater** 30 minutes before sun exposure and frequently throughout the day, even when it is cloudy.
- **Encourage children to drink frequently** to avoid dehydration.
- **Lock up barbecue grills**, gasoline containers, and gardening tools.
- **Enforce proper use of bike helmets**, life jackets, car seats, and safety belts.
- **Never leave children unattended** in a hot car.
- **Check clothing and exposed skin for ticks** and other insects after spending time outdoors.

I hope you find these tips useful as you spend time with your family this summer. Remember the importance of playing it safe, and above all, have fun!

Sincerely,

Kendel S. Ehrlich, First Lady

# CLUB MARYLAND Activities

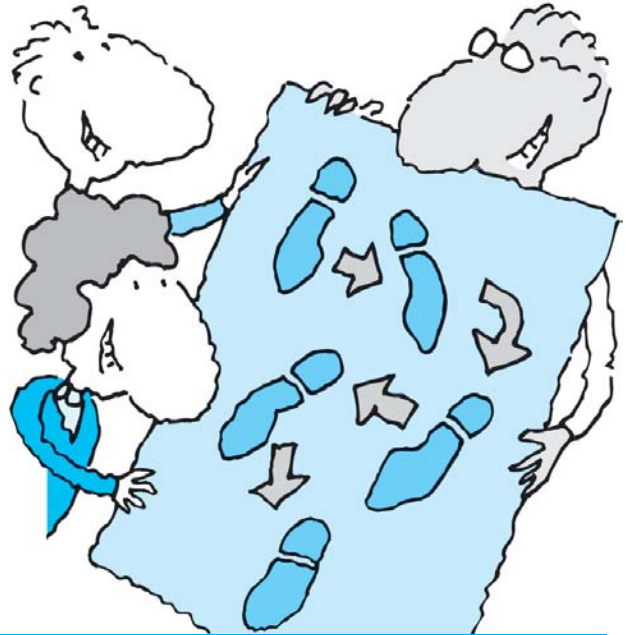
Libby Lewandowski, Wellness Director

## National Employee Health and Fitness Day



*Comptroller Schaefer takes time out to support the troops.*

*Left to right: Richard Carey, Dora Rhodus, Comptroller Schaefer, Tammy Graves, Herb Hackey, and Squeaky Sams.*

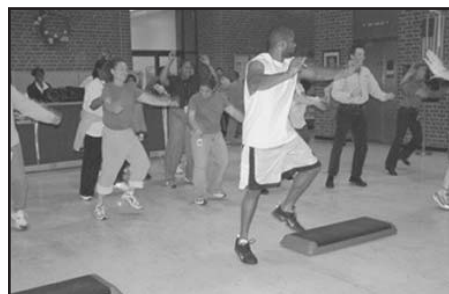


**N**ational Employee Health and Fitness Day is a national health observance created by the National Association for Health and Fitness and the Network of State and Governor's Councils to promote the benefits of physical activity for individuals through their worksites. The association recognizes that workplaces with active health promotion programs have healthier and more productive employees. This year the observance was held on May 21, 2003.

**Jeanette Thomas** organized a memorable fitness day for the Comptroller of Maryland's staff in Annapolis. A military theme was the order of the day. Troops reported to "Boot Camp" and were given their marching orders by the highest-ranking officer, **Comptroller William Donald Schaefer**. Throughout the day, the troops were under the leadership of Master Sergeant, **Candy Colonna** and seven Staff Sergeants, **Katie Archer, Leon Booker, Brenda Brady, Niyati Jhaveri, Michele Knight, Lutharine Ramaloosa, and Linda Welch**. One hundred sixteen recruits chose activities such as walking to the Naval Academy, attending a yoga demonstration, navigating an obstacle course, getting their bone density and blood pressure checked, doing office stretches led by **Deputy Comptroller Steve Cordi**, and **Division Director Jim Arnie**, exercising with weights (canned goods for the food bank), step aerobics, kick-boxing, and Latin dance lessons. The concluding activity was a relay contest. Nine platoons attempted to paint one letter in the word fitness with no hands. The Information Technology Division's team, the Non-Geriatrics, finished in record time.

Twelve other agencies reported participating in National Employee Health and Fitness Day Activities ranging from physical activity scavenger hunts, office Olympics, stair-walking fitness demonstration, speakers, healthy potluck breakfast or lunch, as well as chair massage. Congratulations to Jeanette and the following coordinators who organized activities that raised morale, got employees moving, and reduced their stress.

- **Regina Jewett**, Office of the Secretary of State
- **Katie Gardner**, Western Maryland Hospital Center
- **M. Kelley Hooker**, Register of Wills for Prince George's County
- **Libby Lewandowski**, Department of Budget and Management
- **Elaine Stillwell**, Prince George's County Health Department
- **Kathy Graham**, Developmental Disabilities Administration, Eastern Shore
- **Darleen Whitby**, Talbot County Health Department
- **Donna Phillips**, Maryland Office of People's Counsel
- **Sharon Johnson**, Wicomico County Health Department
- **Courtney Allen**, University of Maryland Baltimore County
- **Faith Steinbach**, Maryland Judicial Center
- **Jennifer Drury**, Saint Mary's County Health Department



*Jonathon, fitness instructor from Gold's Gym, gets Comptroller of Maryland recruits moving.*

# Maryland State Employees Race for the Cure Team

## **CLUB MARYLAND is organizing a State of Maryland Employees Race for the Cure Team.**

Please walk or run with fellow employees and their friends and family on October 4, 2003, at the M&T Stadium (formerly the Ravens Stadium) and help raise funds for breast cancer in Maryland. 75% of the funds raised in the 2002 Maryland Race for the Cure supported 18 grants for local research, education, screening, and breast health programs and treatment. The remaining funds supported the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation's Award and Research Grant program.

The mission of the foundation is to eradicate breast cancer as a life-threatening disease by advancing research, education screening, and treatment. Each year the foundation delivers the message that our best defense against breast cancer is early detection. The Komen Foundation recommends the following steps:

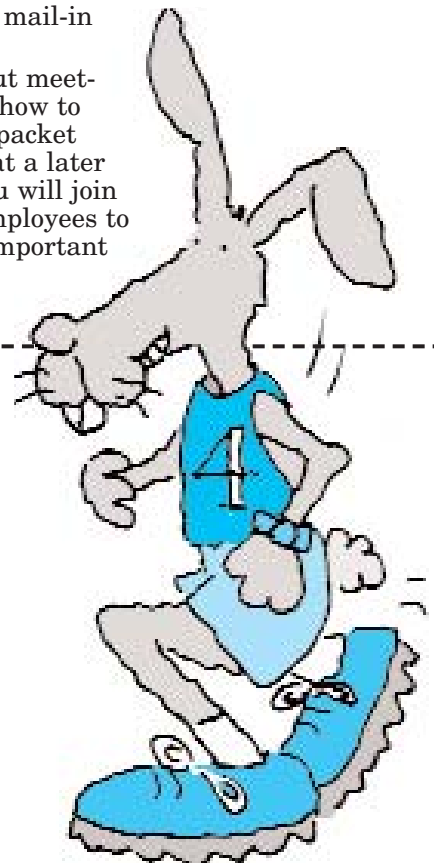
- **Monthly breast self-exams** by age 20;
- **Clinical breast examination** by a trained professional at least every three years starting at age 20 and annually after 40; and
- **Annual screening mammography** for women beginning at age 40. Women under 40 with either a family history of breast cancer or other concerns about personal risk should consult with a trained medical professional about risk assessment and when to begin mammography.

## **There are two registration options:**

**O**nline registration is now open. Go to [www.komenmd.org](http://www.komenmd.org). Click on "race registration." You will be asked if you would like to register as an individual or team. Our team name is *State of Maryland Employees Team*. Our password is *mdgov*. The registration fee is \$25. The deadline for registering online is Friday, September 19 at 7:00 p.m.

**The second option is to obtain a Maryland Race for the Cure Team registration form from CLUB MARYLAND.** Please call us at 410-767-4900 or e-mail Libby Lewandowski at [llewando@dbm.state.md.us](mailto:llewando@dbm.state.md.us). Contact us by August 22 so we can meet the Race for the Cure September 12 mail-in deadline.

Details about meeting place and how to get your race packet will be given at a later date. Hope you will join your fellow employees to support this important cause.



COULD YOU HAVE

## Not-quite-diabetes?

**D**o you know your blood sugar levels?

**You should.**

That's because type 2 diabetes is on the rise in the U.S. — some say at near epidemic proportions.

And though you may not have diabetes, many people do have a condition called “pre-diabetes” — where blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not quite high enough to be called diabetes.

This condition — also called impaired glucose tolerance — carries with it health risks of its own, chief among them, heart disease.

The good news: The condition is reversible at least 58% of the time with lifestyle changes (e.g., weight loss, exercise).

The bad news: It will probably progress to full-blown diabetes if ignored. Diabetes increases the risk for high blood pressure, kidney disease, cardiovascular disease, blindness, and nerve damage.

### SCREENING

• **A simple fasting blood test** can give you your glucose numbers. If you're healthy, you should be screened about every three years.

You may need to get tested more often if you have diabetes risk factors (e.g., overweight, sedentary, family history).

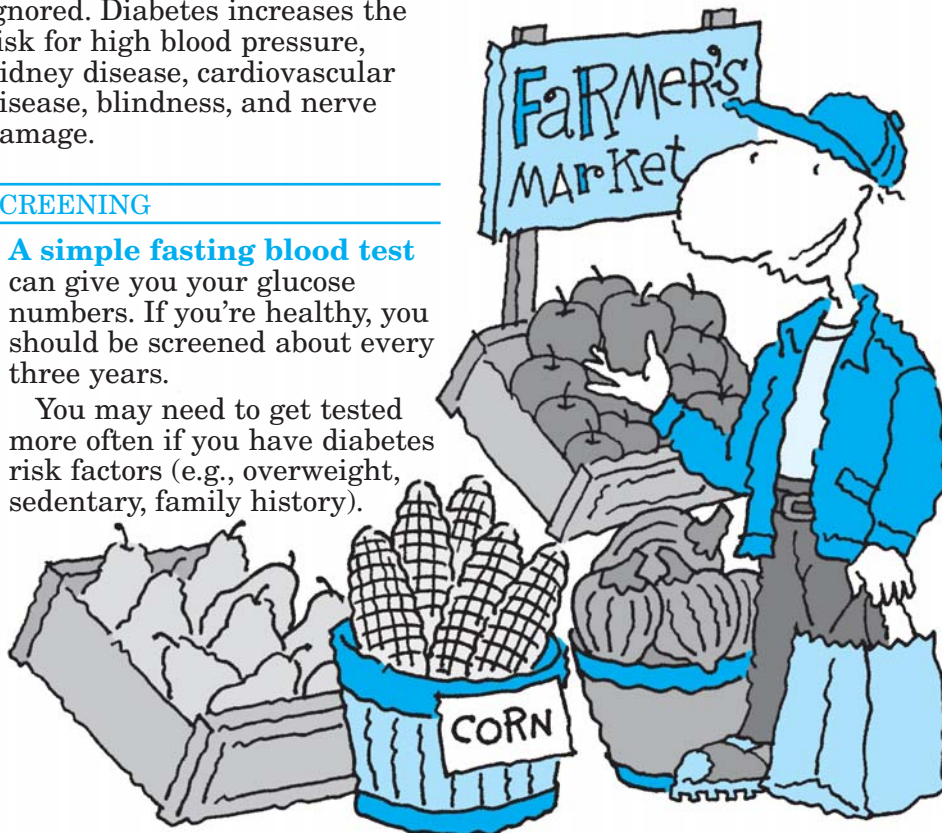
### WHAT'S TOO HIGH?

Fasting blood sugar levels	
Normal	Under 110
Pre-diabetes	110 to 126
Diabetes	126 or higher

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **Lose excess weight.** Even losing a few pounds can help reduce blood sugar levels.
- **Exercise 30 to 60 minutes** most days of the week.
- **Eat more fruits,** vegetables, and whole grains and fewer foods made with sugar and refined grains like white flour.

Sources: American Diabetes Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Institutes of Health



LITTLE-KNOWN FACTS ABOUT

## Sunscreen

**Q:** Does SPF 30 have twice as much sun protection as SPF 15?

**A:** No. SPF protection does not increase proportionately with the number. An SPF of 30 blocks 97% of the sun's burning rays (UVB). An SPF of 15 blocks 93% of those rays. An SPF of 2 blocks about 50%.

Obviously, the SPF system isn't very logical.

Bottom line: The more sensitive your skin is to the sun, the higher the SPF you should use. For example, if your skin is very sensitive, use an SPF 30.

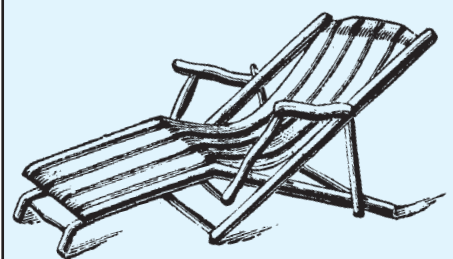
**Q:** Does the SPF system tell how well a sunscreen protects you from both UVA and UVB rays?

**A:** No. The SPF number only tells how well the product protects from UVB rays — the rays that cause sunburns and skin cancer. UVA rays are the ones that cause primarily premature skin aging (they can cause burning too). There's no rating system for UVA protection.

To protect yourself from UVA rays, buy a sunscreen that contains 4% to 7% zinc or Parsol 1789 (avobenzone).

You'll also get some UVA protection from “broad spectrum” sunscreens, but you can't be sure how much.

Source: *Your Best Face*, by Brandith Irwin, MD, and Mark McPherson, PhD



## Doc Talk

Andy Stergachis, Ph.D., R.Ph.

**Q:** What can I do to make sure I'm using over-the-counter (OTC) medications safely?

**A:** Here are 9 ways to get the most from your OTC medications, according to the National Council on Patient Information and Education:

- **Read the label**, and follow dosage instructions.  
Take only the amount recommended. If a little is good, more is not necessarily better.
- **Look for an OTC medicine** that will treat only the symptoms you have.

The more ingredients a medicine has, the more likelihood of a drug interaction (combination products often cost more, too).

- **Know what other drugs**, supplements, or foods to avoid while taking an OTC medicine.
- **When in doubt**, ask a pharmacist before you buy or use an OTC medicine.
- **Be extra-careful** when taking more than one OTC drug product at a time (i.e., be on the lookout for any signs the combination is causing a problem).
- **Don't combine** prescription medicines and OTC drugs without talking to your doctor or pharmacist first.
- **Make sure** that each of your doctors has a list of all the medicines you are taking.
- **Give infants** and children only OTC medicines that are especially formulated for their age and weight.
- **Don't use** OTC medicines after their expiration date.

## dental care

### 5 BIG REASONS

## Why tooth decay's making a comeback

**1 Bottled water.** Most bottled water doesn't contain fluoride.

While not as important for cavity prevention in adult teeth, fluoride does help prevent decay in the developing teeth of children.

**2 Sugared breath mints.** Instead of chewing and swallowing, many people suck on them — which allows more exposure to decay-causing acids.

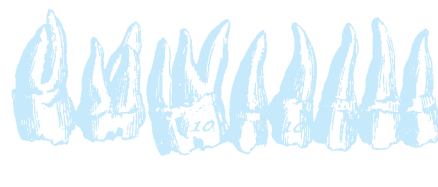
**3 Sugared soft drinks.** In 2000, Americans drank over 53 gallons of soft drinks each

— more than any other beverage.

Soft drinks — which contain the tooth enamel-dissolving combination of sugar and phosphoric acid — are probably the biggest reason for rising rates of tooth decay in the U.S., say experts.

**4 Sports drinks.** Many of these are sweetened with sugar.

**5 Goopy candy.** Soft, chewy, and very sugary candies all tend to stick in the teeth. This makes them ideal cavity-makers.



### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Brush your teeth** at least twice daily, and floss at least once a day.
- **See a dentist regularly.** If you have children, ask about dental sealants to help protect molars.
- **Limit your — and your children's —** intake of sugary treats.

When you do eat sweets, try to brush your teeth right away. At the least, rinse your mouth out with water.

- **Have your children drink fluoridated water** if it's available. Also use fluoridated toothpaste. A pea-sized dab is

enough (make sure young children don't swallow toothpaste, or they could absorb too much fluoride).



### WHAT IS TOOTH DECAY?

Plaque is an invisible, sticky film of bacteria that live on your teeth. These bacteria love sugars and starches.

If you don't clean your teeth after eating, plaque bacteria can use the sugar and starch to produce acids that destroy tooth enamel (decay) and inflame the gums and supporting bone (periodontal disease).

Source: American Dental Association

# your health matters

## this 'n' that

### Being realistic

**“An idealist** believes the short run doesn't count.

**A cynic** believes the long run doesn't matter.

**A realist** believes that what is done or left undone in the short run determines the long run.”

– Sydney J. Harris



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#### WEIGHT LOSS:

### IF IT SOUNDS TOO GOOD...

**N**early 40% of weight-loss advertisements make at least one false statement

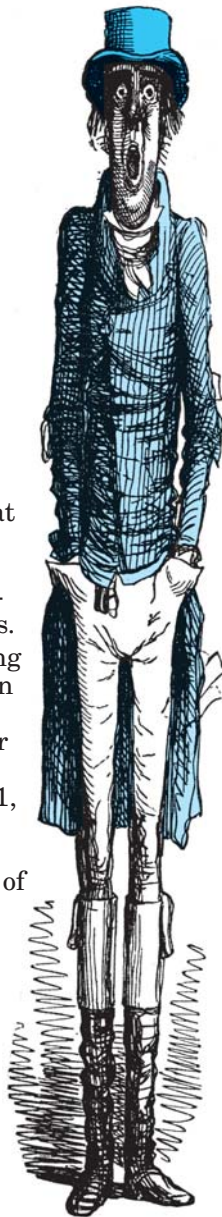
about their product, according to a U.S. government study.

And about 55% of the ads in this study made statements that were “very likely to be false or lacked adequate substantiation of their promises.

“False or misleading claims are common in weight-loss advertising, and based on our comparison of 1992 ads with ads for 2001, the number of products and the amount of advertising, much of it deceptive, appears to have increased dramatically over the last decade,” the report said.

*Editor's note:* If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Source: U.S. Federal Trade Commission



## body, mind & soul

**“Your future has nothing to do with getting somewhere you think you need to be. It has to do with the awareness that getting there means being *here*.”**

– Carl A. Hammerschlag

**“When everything's coming your way, chances are you're in the wrong lane.”**

– Unknown

**“Remember, all the answers you need are inside of you. You only have to become quiet enough to hear them.”**

– Debbie Ford

**“It's kind of fun to do the impossible.”**

– Walt Disney

**“A certain amount of opposition is a great help to a person. Kites rise against, not with the wind.”**

– John Neal

**“Conscience is the inner voice that tells you the IRS might check your return.”**

– Unknown

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  - James C. Dipaula, Secretary
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